Total precipitation in inches) for the months May through September, 1997. Due to the blizzard in early April and the missing data that resulted, April's reports were not included in the total.

Rain ends its reign for another year

Darin Langerud

As the days continue to grow shorter and colder, Mother Nature's precipitation of choice will again change from rain to snow.

It also means a six-month break for the Atmospheric Resource Board's 850 volunteer rain gauge observers. Since 1977, nearly 3,000 North Dakotans have graciously volunteered their time to record rainfall and hail occurrences during the months of April through September. Snowfall is not measured by our observers primarily because the gauges we provide are not designed for snow measurement.

Last year a considerable amount of effort was put into formatting, cross-checking and verifying historical data for the years 1977 through 1993. The data was then ingested into the computer database which was implemented in 1994.

Now that the historical data resides in the database, we turn to historical evaluation and mapping of rainfall and hail patterns. From this data we will be able to construct a rainfall and hail climatology for North Dakota in detail that has previously been impossible.

We also plan to improve our means of making the raw and derived data available to the general public through our web page. We will be updating our web page with graphical maps and charts of historical data as they are generated.

In addition, we plan to make it possible for you to download raw precipitation data from our database directly to your computer to use for whatever purpose you wish. We invite you to check our web page frequently, as interesting insight into North Dakota's summer precipitation climatology comes to light. ■